

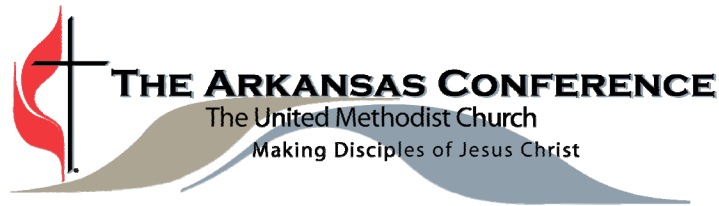
AN APOSTOLATE OF PRAYER

“Imagine Ministry” A Guide for Reading, Meditation, and Prayer August 1, 2009

We ask that pastors, prayer groups, teams in the local church, and individuals use the prayer guide as an intentional daily and weekly study for devotions. This prayer guide is available on the conference web site and will be sent out weekly on the conference email network.

Sources:

- A Guide for Reading, Meditation, and Prayer for all who participate in The United Methodist Way.
- Upper Room Books
- General Board of Discipleship, United Methodist Church
- Scripture quotations are from the NRSV
- Excerpts from “Covenant Renewal Service and Opening Prayer,” copyright 1992 United Methodist Publishing House. Wesley Covenant Service abridged by Ole E. Borgen.
- United Methodist Hymnal



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“Imagine Ministry” A Guide for Reading, Meditation, and Prayer

Week Eight: September 20 – September 26, 2009

Write a prayer this week for God’s guidance and a deeper understanding of God’s abundance. Claim the promise contained in Mark 6:41 ff. “taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And all (5,000) ate and were filled.”

If we give what we have Jesus can make it more than enough.

The disciples correctly assessed the situation and gave Jesus good practical advice – it is late and the people will need food. Send them away to take care of themselves. Jesus’ command, “You give them something to eat” must have felt overwhelming – the needs were too great. Imagine yourself to be one of the disciples. Record your thoughts, feelings and emotions.

When you look at the needs of the church and of the world today, how do you feel?

What is your response if Jesus were to say to you today, “How many loaves have you? Go and see.” Where would you go to find the answer?

Radical hospitality and extravagant generosity both require honesty. How many loaves have you? Go and see – is the first step on the journey. So, how many loaves do you have?

In early Arkansas Methodism, when we grew at a fast pace, the circuit rider in making the circuit was always looking for a new place to preach the gospel. If a building was empty at certain times in a week, or Sunday morning, the preacher would write the presiding elder (DS) and ask permission to start a preaching post. Over time if it grew, it became a preaching station, and thus a new church was added to the circuit. Pastors were always looking for a new place to start a church. While the preacher was on the circuit, the laity were seeking and bringing new converts to the faith for the circuit pastor to baptize and confirm when the pastor was next present.

In spite of economic challenges, we live in an age of abundance and opportunity to share the gospel. Where in your local community are there new church starts or places that your congregation, small group, and lay speakers can reach out to the un-churched?

Why not respond to the opportunity? Do you need help? The Annual Conference New Church Start Institute can be of assistance.

Please continue to pray for the Imagine Ministry Team and for the future of the Arkansas Annual Conference.